
Planning for the Future

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An updated version of the commission's existing Comprehensive Plan was issued in July of 2001. It consists primarily of a compilation of commission policies and approved projects.

It serves as a starting point for the development of a new, more forward-looking water resources plan for the Delaware River Basin—a plan that will chart a course for the future, and, it is hoped, have the necessary buy-in from other water resource agencies and organizations to ensure its implementation through a set of coordinated policies and programs.

During the year, a “convening paper” was produced by a consultant who provided a summary and assessment of the interests of the various stakeholder groups in the basin. Representatives of many of these groups serve on the Watershed Advisory Council, a broad-based panel created by the DRBC to guide it in the planning process.

At a council meeting on October 1, 2001, members discussed some of the key policy issues being debated. They included:

- Whether inter-basin and inter-watershed transfers of water should be discouraged.
- Whether the prioritization of water uses within the basin should be revised to better balance the water needs of aquatic ecosystems and those of humans.
- Whether and how Comprehensive Plan policies can encourage land use practices that protect water resources.

The council agreed at the October meeting to release an initial set of draft goals and objectives for the plan. Three meetings designed to solicit public input were then held in November in Narrowsburg, N.Y.; at the

commission's offices in West Trenton, N.J.; and in Newark, Del.

Comments received at the meetings were summarized by DRBC staff and addressed at a two-day workshop held in December where council members developed a revised draft set of plan goals and objectives. This draft document was accompanied by a proposal to assign each of the goals and objectives to either existing DRBC advisory committees or to ad hoc subcommittees created to assist in the planning process.

Committee members were then charged with the task of developing management strategies to implement the goals/objectives. The strategies will define implementation steps and identify the organizations or agencies responsible for carrying out the programs. Funding sources also will be identified, as will indicators to be used in measuring program performance.

More information about the development of the new Comprehensive Plan for the Delaware River Basin can be found on the DRBC web site at: <http://www.nj.gov/drbc/cp.htm>.

“A critical step in the process is developing management scenarios . . .”

— Carol R. Collier, DRBC executive director

